

Parsons Nursery, Cheat District Ranger Office  
South side of U.S. Route 219, .25 miles  
southeast of Parsons  
Parsons Vicinity  
Tucker County  
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-237-G

HABS  
WVA,  
47-PARS.V,  
1-G-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY  
MID-ATLANTIC REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA 19106

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDING SURVEY

HABS  
WVA,  
47-PARS.V,  
1-G-

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PARSONS NURSERY, Cheat District Ranger Office

Location: South side of U. S. Route 219, .25 miles  
southeast of Parsons, Tucker County, West  
Virginia

USGS Parsons Quadrangle, Universal Transverse  
Mercator Coordinates: 17.614292.4327640

Present Owner: Monongahela National Forest  
Department of Agriculture  
Sycamore Street, Box 1548  
Elkins, WV 26241

Last Occupant: Department of Natural Resources  
State of West Virginia

Last Use: Nursery office; vacant

Significance: The Cheat District Ranger office was built in  
1938. According to John King, members of the  
Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons very  
likely built it. This was the first District  
Ranger office built for the Monongahela  
National Forest. It was the administrative  
headquarters for the Cheat District until  
1966. Then it became the headquarters for  
the Parsons Nursery of the Department of  
Natural Resources, State of West Virginia,  
until 1985. For overview of Parsons Nursery,  
see HABS No. WV-237.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1938, is derived from C. R. McKim, Monongahela National Forest History, draft manuscript, 1970.
2. Architect: Neither architect nor landscape architect are known.
3. Original and present owner: Monongahela National Forest.
4. Builder: The Cheat District Ranger office was likely constructed by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps Camp Parsons for Monongahela National Forest, according to John King.
5. Original Plans: None.
6. Alterations and additions: None.

B. Historical Context:

The Cheat District of Monongahela National Forest was formed in 1920, the same year Monongahela National Forest was established. In 1938, the decision was made to construct District Ranger offices and residences on each of the Districts in the Forest. The Cheat District received the first funding, with the residence constructed using 1937 Fiscal Year funds and the office constructed in 1938 at a cost of \$6156. Ralph Smoot was the first ranger to occupy the office. Both the ranger and assistant ranger occupied the office room, the clerk and telephone operator used the outer office. Later the secretary used the outer office, according to Dovie Fansler. When a new post office was proposed in Parsons, in 1966, the Forest Service decided that the Cheat District Ranger could be more accessible to the public by having his office in town, on the second floor of the post office. The Cheat District Ranger office moved back to the Parsons Nursery Bottom, to the Parsons Timber and Watershed Laboratory in 1983. When the Cheat District Ranger office moved to the town of Parsons, the building became the office for the Parsons Nursery. It remained in this use until 1985.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: The Cheat District Ranger

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office is one of a complex of Forest Service buildings constructed in a simple, rustic, shingle style. This building differs from the other nursery building by having a hip roof, enclosed soffit, and no corner boards.

2. Condition of fabric: Good. Flood damage removed parts of a window; another window is boarded up. The basement contains 4" of water. Plumbing and electricity are disconnected.

B. Description of the Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: A one-story, rectangular plan, this building is 39'-9" x 22'-3". The building is two structural bays. The west bay has two front windows, no side windows. The east bay has a door and two windows on the front, three windows on the side. The building has a basement accessible by a wooden, enclosed staircase.
2. Foundation: 8" poured concrete basement under the east bay, 8" poured concrete foundation with crawl space under the west bay.
3. Walls: Exterior walls are wood shingled with random width, cedar, cut shingles applied in courses of 7" exposure. There are no corner boards. The foundation roof height at the corner is 9'-0".
4. Structural system: Most of the framing system is not visible. The floor is pine "2x10's" on 16" centers, covered in diagonal "1x6" pine sheathing. The roof framing is not visible.
5. Porches, stoops, balconies, bulkheads: There is a wooden, bracketed hood over the front door. It is painted yellow. The 5' x 3'-3" concrete stoop has three risers, and is covered in red, wire-cut brick veneer.
6. Chimneys: Exterior, end wall chimney of wire-cut, yellow-painted brick, 5'-4" x 2'-8" with a face brick rake and 2' x 2'-8" stack. The cap is corbelled, 1 course.
7. Openings
  - a. Doorways and doors: Front doorway has plain, 4" board architrave with butt-jointed head. Doorway height is 6'-8". The pine front door has 3/3/3 lights over one horizontal molded panel, over two molded panels. The rear door is the same. Both

doors once had wooden screen doors. Doorway trim, doors, and screen doors are painted yellow.

- b. Windows and shutters: All windows, except the bathroom window are the same. Window frames are plain, 4" butt-jointed jambs with 4" heads. There are 1-1/2" window sills. All sash is 6/6, double hung. Windows are 4'-6" x 2'-10". Window sash and trim are painted yellow. There are now no shutters, but there are original shutter pintels. Shutters were board-and-batten, painted yellow (see WV-237-G-4).

- 8. Roof: The hip roof has asphalt shingles, a replacement of the original, sawn, cedar shingles. The west wing has a gable roof with boxed eave returns. The building has a yellow-painted, boxed cornice with 4" fascia, 12" soffit, 4" entablature trimmed top and bottom with 1" quarter-round moldings. The gutters are aluminum. There are wooden louver vents each side of the chimney.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plans: The rectangular building has two main rooms with service/storage between the rooms. Basement height is 7'-0"; main floor ceiling height is 8'-6".
- 2. Stairways: There is an enclosed basement staircase on the north wall with pine risers and treads.
- 3. Flooring: The floor is pine subflooring covered with sheet linoleum, not affixed to the floor and held by a pine quarter-round molding. Baseboards are pine, 7-1/2" tall with a 3/4" cove molding at the top.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Both walls and ceiling are rough plaster on sawn lath. The ceiling height is 8'-6". All interior pine trim, doors and windows is cherry-stained and varnished in all rooms.
- 5. Openings:
  - a. Doors: Door jambs are 5", pine, low-relief moldings, mitered at corners. Interior doors are pine, six-panel doors, 6'-8" tall. Doors and door frames are cherry-stained.
  - b. Windows: Window jambs are the same as door jambs, 5", pine, low-relief moldings, mitered at corners with the same under sill boards. Sash is cherry-stained pine.

6. Decorative features and trim: The back hall closet has wooden shelves on three sides, floor to ceiling, adjustable. The fireplace in the ranger's office has a 3'-10" pine mantle shelf with a mitered opening architrave of the same molding as window and door moldings. The red, wire-cut brick firebox opening is 2'-4" x 3'-2". The mantle is cherry-stained and varnished.
  7. Hardware: The front and rear door hardware is plain iron with three ball-pinned hinges. The front door has a plain, brass-plated, iron knob without plate, with key escutcheon plate with bevelled edge. The rear knob is new. Each window has two iron pintels for hanging shutters. Interior doors have two ball-pinned hinges and the same knobs and escutcheon as the front door. Windows have brass-plated swivel thumb locks, two rectangular, inset brass-plated lift plates and Venetian blind hardware at top and bottom.
  8. Mechanical equipment: None of the mechanical systems now function. There was once forced-air heat, replaced by baseboard heat. Plumbing and electricity have been disconnected. Lighting was by ceiling-mounted florescent tubes.
  9. Original furnishings: None.
- D. Site: The building faces southeast, 147°30'. It survives on its original site, together with most of the original Cheat District structures. From the front stoop, a 3'-10" concrete walk extends west to a parking lot (see sketch plan). A flagstone walk curves to the east. In the rear, an 8' gravel lane runs parallel to the building from the parking lot to the original wash house. There is a 2-1/2' diameter red pine (*Pinus resinosa*) 32' west and 32' north of the northwest corner of the building.

### PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

- A. Architectural drawings: None.
- B. Historic views: Forest Service photographs, Monongahela National Forest Office, Elkins, WV.
- C. Interviews: Dovie Fansler, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Cheat Ranger District secretary, 1957-1964; John King, 9-5-1989, Wanakena, NY, silviculture supervisor, CCC Camp Parsons, 1933-39; Harry Mahoney, 6-10-1989, Elkins, WV, Cheat District Ranger, 1967-1971.

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- D. McKim, C. R., Monongahela National Forest History, unpublished manuscript, November, 1970.

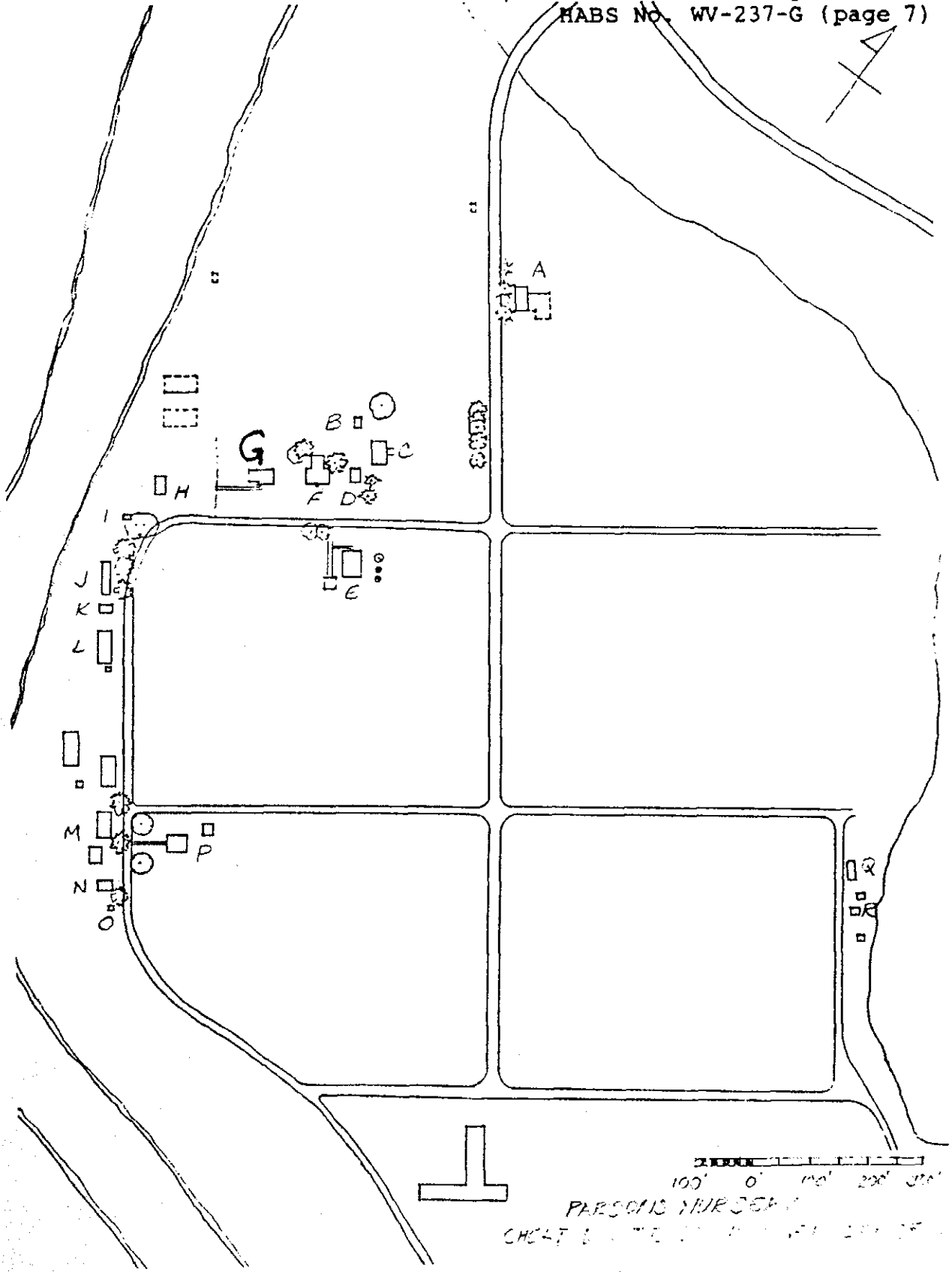
Monongahela National Forest, Proposed Plan, Parsons Nursery, unpublished manuscript, 1938.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The architectural and historical documentation of the Parsons Nursery site has been undertaken to fulfill a memorandum of agreement signed by the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, the West Virginia SHPO and the USDA Forest Service as part of requirements under regulation 36 CFR 800 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Recording has taken place prior to substantial modification and/or removal of structures damaged by a flood in November, 1985.

This documentation has been prepared by: Rebecca M. Rogers, Preservation Consultant, 44 Audubon Road, Youngstown, Ohio, under contract to Monongahela National Forest, April-November, 1989.

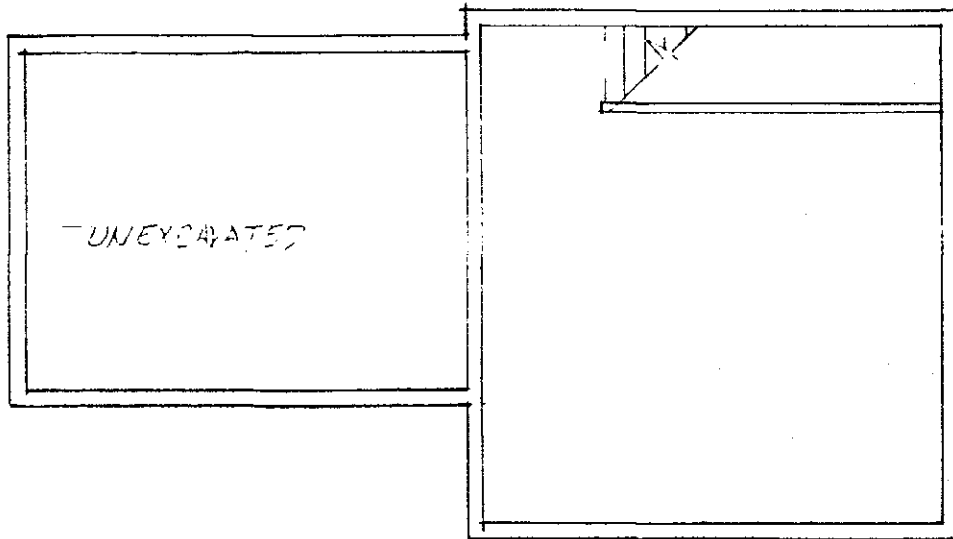
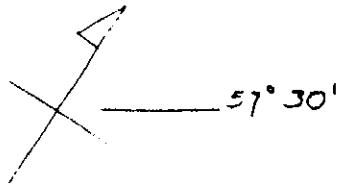
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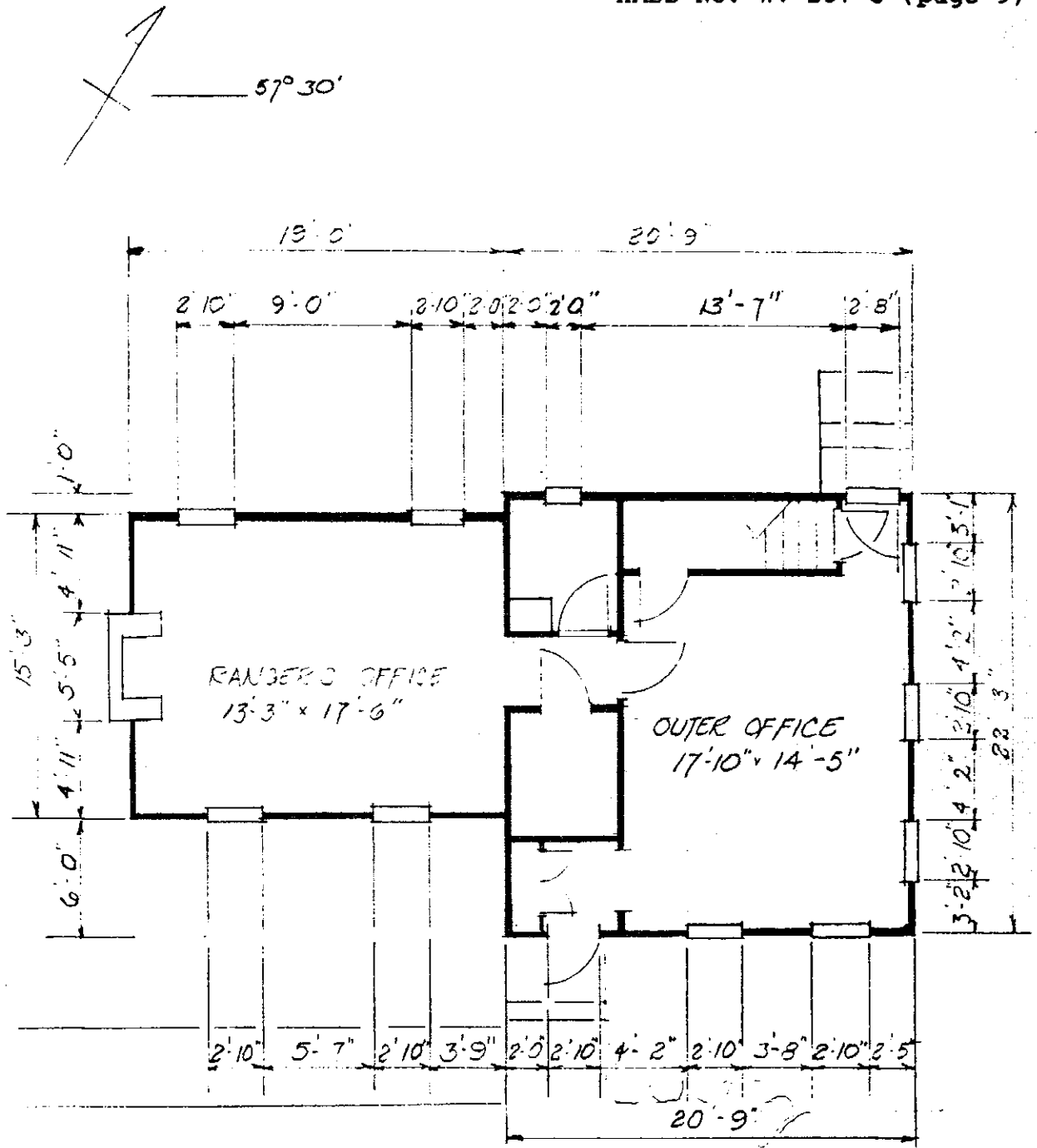


BASEMENT  
CHEAT DISTRICT RANGER OFFICE

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